



GUILDFORD HOCKEY CLUB

AFFILIATED TO SURREY HOCKEY ASSOCIATION AND ENGLAND HOCKEY
Clubhouse & Ground: Broadwater School, Summers Road, Godalming, Surrey GU7 3BW
www.guildfordhc.com | 01483 416925

AGM 2021 – President's Report – 2020/21

A quick look back at 2020/21

This has been a very unusual season – we are all thoroughly well-educated about the covid pandemic, vaccine types and development, road maps for opening up of 'normal' life and the hope for holidays: to book or not to book. Signing in pitch-side has become normal and bubbles now mean something very different.

Looking back to September 2020, we were all very glad to get back to playing proper matches and training was happening every week. We didn't have access to all the pitch time we had become used to, but we coped. After 5 or 6 matches, the inevitable happened and it all stopped, only to start again just before Christmas, and then stop again in January.

While some clubs hung up their boots at that point, we restarted the season in March, continued to play our remaining league games and added friendlies; Surrey was one of the few counties to do so. While these results may not have any standing, we did have our Women's 4s winning their division yet again – and would have expected to move up their 5th division in 4 years, outstanding progress!

Sadly our 1st teams were not able to complete their seasons and despite their excellent results will play South East premier hockey next season. In all of this we launched our Flyerz hockey for disabled children and their families.

As President of the Club I try to see as much hockey as possible – not so easy this year – but I did see our O40s and O50s EH Championship (Cup) games recently as well as the Under 14 Girls. I see the completely filled pitches on Friday nights with hundreds of young players having a great time. I hear the stories of the brilliant matches played, the huge numbers of goals scored by individuals, and I read the league results tables avidly!!

Turning to the new season...

Next year will be different – new teams to play against, no more fighting the South London traffic and with more teams and pitches needed we may play more home games away from Broadwater.

We have committed to increasing the senior teams by 3 for next year making GHC the biggest we have ever seen – so, now is a good time to talk to your friends and encourage them to get back to playing!

Our youth teams are thriving, ranging from U6s up to U18s. Every age group has been well looked after and the dropout rates are very low which backs up our assessment that we are getting it right.

We have had several young players selected for NAGS squads this year; congratulations to all those who were selected. There were some who didn't make those final places and it's hard to see others succeed but no-one's career in hockey stops at 17 – you are still amongst the best young players in the country.

Volunteers

Recently we celebrated National Volunteers' Week – there are literally hundreds of people I could thank so this is a personal and heartfelt Thank You to everyone who has ever raised a hand to offer to help out.

There are some who put in a mighty effort and do huge jobs for the club by serving on the Board , captaining teams or managing age groups where there are over 100 young players to arrange coaching and matches for every week.

Our umpires, team managers, first aiders, are all very much valued. We have a fabulous team of Young Leaders who are gaining tremendous experience helping with coaching and umpiring. And then there are those who offer to paint a changing room, tidy out a kit store, search for the balls that have gone over the wire.....

Every action however small helps the club to move forward and our members to have the experience they join up for. I particularly want to thank Dave Jennings for his work as Saturday Fixtures Secretary and doing all our pitch allocations, as well as coaching the Women's 3rd team. Andrew Fergusson may have provided fewer match teas this season but has revamped the kitchen and storage, so we are fit for September. Matt de Souza has organised our senior match umpires this season – so between these three volunteers our senior matches have been very well organised.

We also have our amazing team of coaches headed up by Dan Fox. It is clear that Dan's enthusiasm for the game goes from the top to the bottom of the club - I've seen him coaching beginners and Back to Hockey dads just as willingly as he is working with the elite Juniors and Men's 1st XI.



GUILDFORD
HOCKEY CLUB



Dan's attention to planning this season with all its ups and downs has been so thorough and carefully thought out we have been able to keep going when other clubs have stopped. His team of coaches – whether paid or voluntary – have provided a full programme for all our teams and juniors, and despite the fact it's June some competitions are still going.

James Bennett has done a fabulous job putting in place our programme for introducing hockey into the local state schools which will start in September. The money to pay for this programme came from the Quiz Night and other donations through crowdfunding which was then matched by a large donation. We needed to have over 100 different people involved to qualify for the grant, so thank you to those who made the effort to donate.

Thank You to our Partners

We also have our Partners to thank for all the extra activities and facilities their funds help us to provide. I know that for some of these companies and people this year has been hugely challenging – and some may not be able to continue their support.

So, I just want to say Thank You for the time you have been with us; we appreciate what you have done for the Club and we hope that in time to come you will want to come back and support us again.

Those we have lost this season

As President I also hear about former members who sadly have died. This year we lost Brenda Dodswell and Angela Rye, both former 1st XI Ladies. I never played with Brenda although she umpired games for my team, but I did play with Angela in my early GHC days. Great ladies who will be missed. We also tragically lost Tommy Dann mid-season.

Looking ahead for the Club

So now looking forward, the Board is working hard to bring our Club forward to be one of the premier clubs in the country. We are apparently already the third largest in number and there are plans to expand not only our numbers but our breadth and depth of programmes and hockey on offer.

We have plans to update our clubhouse which, after 25 years, needs some tlc. The lockdown summer gave us the time to redecorate – thanks to James Relph who organised the teams of painters as well as leading our sponsorship.

We are about to add artwork and signage that will inspire us all – thanks to Melinda Rock who has also been a fabulous Junior hockey lead and Communications lead including producer of InTouch.

We have further plans to alter the ground floor to improve storage space and add a tuckshop/coffee bar pitch side. We are also working on the plans and financing of the practise area - which Mark Lenel and Mike Kefford have been working on, in addition to nurturing our relationship with Broadwater School. Mike has also served as our Men's Captain, guiding and supporting the efforts of the many teams.

Jo Collins has continued as Women's Captain, working closely with Dave Dickson on the addition of extra teams as our numbers grow, and Dave is our Teamo mastermind and Membership Secretary.

A major landmark happened this year as we finally achieved Clubmark status – Gavin Lotay did most of the work on this, a fairly thankless task, but very necessary as it opens doors to funding applications and is the quality accreditation we need to be able to deliver programmes like the new England Hockey Talent Development pathway.

Tony and Dave Hall continue to keep the clubhouse clean and in good repair.

A successful Club depends on having its finances in order and you will see from the accounts and budget presentations Mark Lenel has ours firmly under control – not something we could have said 5 or 6 years ago.

For most of our members our interest in hockey outside of GHC probably goes no further than watching the Eurohockey matches or hoping the Olympics will take place. I don't expect everyone to be well informed about the wholesale changes taking place in our sport, but there is change coming over the summer.

Looking ahead in Hockey

Following on from the EH AGM of 2019, the governance of hockey across the country will switch from approximately 55 different organisations to 8 new areas. We fall into the South East region and this body will officially come into being after the inaugural AGM next month.

County Hockey Associations will continue but with a changed role. In September we will have the introduction of completely new leagues countrywide. Changes to elite development are running in parallel and all will be managed by the new governing bodies and selected clubs.

If this sounds like too great a challenge, please be reassured that members of the Board and Dan have been involved from the start of these changes and we are involving captains and coaches for the season ahead. There are some big changes



GUILDFORD
HOCKEY CLUB



coming for all our teams, both senior and junior, and this coming first season is likely to be testing. I have great confidence that with the good will and support of all the hockey family we will emerge with a better structure and streamlined competition systems that will benefit all of us.

GHC will be one of the biggest clubs in the new South East Region and we hope that by April 2022 we will have both our top teams in the National League Conference – a first for our Women's 1s but a welcome return for the Men. Our new league will be the Oaks league which leads into the South East regional and premier leagues.

Junior hockey will also get an overhaul of organisation and so I'm very pleased to tell you that Melinda Rock has been asked to chair the England Hockey South East Area Junior Competitions committee.

Dan Fox has also put in place an exciting Junior elite GHC programme called Future Stars for next year which will be a pre-cursor of the new EH talent academies. Many of you will be aware of this already as he has held a number of meetings with parents recently.

So, in summary, despite everything we have encountered this year, we are in a good place to push forward with many of the physical plans we identified some years ago; we are increasing in size, without compromising on our training and coaching and the opportunities for GHC members to achieve their best whether through playing, coaching or umpiring will continue to be our motto. GHC will continue to be a great place to play and offer great hockey for everyone.

Maggs Kyte

president@guildfordhc.com